

Assigned AUSA:

County of Investigation: Spokane County

Warrant for arrest of:

Leslie Rae Howerton are incorporated herein by this reference.

FILED IN THE
U.S. DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

Sep 12, 2022

SEAN F. McAVOY, CLERK

AFFIDAVIT

State of Washington)
) ss
County of Spokane)

I, Shannon K. Saylor, being duly sworn, depose and state the following:

AFFIANT BACKGROUND

1. I am a Federal Agent with the United States Postal Inspection Service and have been so employed since 2006. I am currently assigned to the Seattle Division, Spokane Domicile, and am responsible for investigating controlled substance violations involving the United States Mails. In this capacity I have received specialized training in investigations involving the transmission of controlled substances or the proceeds from the sale of controlled substances through the United States mails. I have also received training on the identification of controlled substances and interdiction of controlled substances.

2. I have participated in dozens, if not hundreds, of postal inspection cases in my career, many of which have involved the interdiction of packages that

contain controlled substances. I have been the affiant on dozens, if not hundreds, of federal search warrants, during my decade-plus career as a Postal Inspector.

3. In conjunction with my official duties, your affiant has conducted an investigation into the Distribution of a Controlled Substance by Leslie Rae Howerton as set forth herein, asserts there is probable cause to believe that Leslie Rae Howerton has committed the crimes of Use of the U.S. Mails with Intent to Distribute the Proceeds of an Unlawful Activity, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1952(a)(1); Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Distribute, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1); Use of A Communication Facility in Committing Drug Offenses, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 843(b); Attempt and Conspiracy, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846;

4. As this affidavit is being submitted for a limited purpose, I have not included all facts known by law enforcement. I only set forth facts necessary to support the issuance of the requested search warrants.

APPLICABLE LAW

5. Pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 843(b), it is “unlawful for any person knowingly or intentionally to use any communication facility in committing or in causing or facilitating the commission of any act or acts constituting a felony under any provision of this subchapter or subchapter II of this chapter.”

6. Distribution of controlled substances, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841(a) constitutes “a felony under provision of this subchapter,” as cited above.

7. A “communication facility” is defined as “any and all public and private instrumentalities used or useful in the transmission of writing, signs, signals, pictures, or sounds of all kinds and includes mail, telephone, wire, radio, and all other means of communication.”

8. Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1952(a)(1), it is unlawful for anyone who “travels in interstate or foreign commerce or uses the mail or any facility in interstate or foreign commerce, with intent to: (1) distribute the proceeds of any unlawful activity; or (2) commit any crime of violence to further any unlawful activity; or (3) otherwise promote, manage, establish, carry on, or facilitate the promotion, management, establishment, or carrying on, of any unlawful activity.”

INVESTIGATION

9. On or about July 2, 2021, I conducted an electronic review of USPS Priority and Express mail parcels incoming into Spokane, Washington, and its surrounding area. The review process includes identifying parcels with characteristics consistent with the use of the U.S. mail for controlled substance trafficking. I observed a Priority mail parcel with a tracking number of 9505514899241182937000, herein referred to as the (SUBJECT PARCEL) had

some of the characteristics consistent with packages that contain controlled substances.

10. I removed the SUBJECT PARCEL from the mail stream at the Colville Post Office and I immediately observed the SUBJECT PARCEL bearing a hand-written Priority mail label. I photographed the parcel. I further noticed the SUBJECT PARCEL was taped at all seams. I know from training and experience that drug traffickers tape parcel seams to avoid detection from trained K-9 narcotic detection dogs. The SUBJECT PARCEL contained the following indicators that I know from my training and experience to be consistent with parcels that contain controlled substances and/or proceeds of controlled substance trafficking.

11. The recipient address on the SUBJECT PARCEL was listed as “Michael Oneil, 158 E 1st Ave. Colville, WA 99114”. I searched for the recipient address through the same databases and learned that there were numerous names associated with the recipient address, including one business called “Treasured Seconds.” My further research showed that this business is a thrift store owned by Leslie R. Dorland, who is also known as Leslie R. Howerton and Leslie R. O’Neil with a date of birth of 07/9/1975 and a social security number ending in 0681.

12. On July 7, 2021, I applied for and was granted a federal search warrant to search SUBJECT PARCEL for evidence of a crime, contraband, fruits of crime, or other items illegally possessed, and property designed for use,

intended for use, or used in committing a crime in related to a violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 843(b) and 841(a)(1), Drug Trafficking, and 18 U.S.C. § 1952(a)(1), Use of the U.S. Mails with Intent to Distribute the Proceeds of any Unlawful Activity.

13. On July 7, 2021, at approximately 4:45 p.m., Inspector Connolly, Border Patrol Special Agent Asa Koontz and DEA Agent Cody Herman executed the federal search warrant on the SUBJECT PARCEL. Inspector Connolly informed me that the SUBJECT PARCEL contained approximately 4 pounds of crystalline substance which field tested presumptive positive for methamphetamine. The suspected controlled substance was concealed inside a plastic bag, wrapped inside of carbon paper and heat sealed in 3 separate bags. Inspector Connolly photographed the SUBJECT PARCEL and its contents. The methamphetamine was removed from the parcel and entered into USPS Property Evidence Acquisition Program (PEAP) numbers IS0001543505- 494g methamphetamine, IS0001543507- 902g methamphetamine and IS0001543508- 490g of methamphetamine.

14. On July 8, 2021, I applied for and was granted a federal search warrant to search Leslie Howerton's business Treasured Seconds located at 158 E. 1st Ave. Colville, WA 99114 and her person for evidence and instrumentalities of violations of: 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) (Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Distribute); 21 U.S.C. § 843(b) (Use of Any Communication Facility in

Committing Drug Offenses); 21 U.S.C. § 846 (Conspiracy to Distribute Controlled Substances); and 18 U.S.C. § 1952(a)(1) (Use of the U.S. Mails with Intent to Distribute the Proceeds of any Unlawful Activity).

15. On July 9, 2021, I re-sealed the SUBJECT PARCEL without the methamphetamine and shammed it with paper, so it weighed close to its original mailing weight.

16. On July 9, 2021, Border Patrol agents, DEA agents, Stevens County Sheriff's Office Detectives and I conducted a control delivery of the SUBJECT PARCEL with tracking number 9505514899241182937000. At approximately 1:00 PM I walked into to Treasured Seconds business and delivered the SUBJECT PARCEL. Howerton and her boyfriend, Timmy Dube were in the business when I left the parcel on the counter.

17. Approximately 5 minutes after the delivery, Howerton and Dube locked the business doors and walked to a local restaurant and were contacted by law enforcement and transported back to Treasured Seconds for an interview. I advised Howerton that she was under investigation for trafficking in narcotics and explained that I had questions for her. I further advised Howerton of her constitutional rights from a pre-printed rights card which she waived in writing. The interview was recorded.

18. Howerton was shown USPS Priority Mail parcel with tracking number 9505514899241182397000 addressed to Michael O'Neil at 158 E 1st Ave, Colville, WA 99114 and stated that she was expecting the parcel and that Michael O'Neil is her ex-husband. Howerton further stated that the parcel was intended for her, not O'Neil and contained 4 pounds of methamphetamine.

19. Howerton explained that she is a pound meth dealer and sells each pound for \$3,000 to a person whom she identified by name in Idaho. Howerton stated that this person typically goes through two pounds per week, and he meets her on Flowery Trail Pass in Chewelah to get the meth. Howerton stated she transports it there in a bag and the person usually has someone drive him because he doesn't have a license. Howerton stated that when she gets the meth in the mail, she calls her customer and typically sells him 2 pounds at a time and keeps the other 2 pounds at her thrift shop in the office near the printer until her customer is ready for it.

20. Howerton stated that she receives shipments of meth every 3 to 4 weeks.

21. Howerton gave investigators consent to search her vehicle, a Mazda Pickup truck with Idaho license plate 7BL0441. Investigators seized approximately 243g of methamphetamine, 18g of mushrooms, 27g of marijuana,

and a loaded syringe of methamphetamine from a black Honeywell safe in the truck.

22. On September 1, 2022, I learned from Border Patrol Agent Koontz that Howerton was communicating with a male inmate in an Idaho prison. Agent Koontz stated that he had listened to several recorded calls between the inmate and Howerton and she was fixing up a recreational vehicle (RV) and was planning on fleeing the state with the inmate after his release in September of 2022. Agent Koontz further advised me that Howerton and the inmate planned to flee together to the backwoods of Arkansas and live off the grid.

23. On September 2, 2022, Agent Koontz advised me that he located Howerton in Newport, WA and arrested her on an active state warrant for Possession with Intent to Deliver methamphetamine. Agent Koontz advised me that at the time of Howerton's arrest he recovered an "eight ball", 1/8 of an ounce of methamphetamine in her possession.

24. Based on these facts, your affiant requests the Court issue a warrant for the arrest of Leslie Rae Howerton a female with a date of birth of July 9, 1975, charging her with Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Distribute, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1); and Use of A Communication Facility in Committing Drug Offenses, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 843(b).

I declare under penalty of perjury that the statements above are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Respectfully submitted,


Shannon K. Saylor
U.S. Postal Inspector

JAG

Sworn to telephonically and signed electronically

~~Subscribed and sworn to before me~~ this 12th day of September 2022.





Honorable James A. Goeke
United States Magistrate Judge